

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20 COME-00
EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 AID-05 /097 W
-----118487 201618Z /43

P R 201512Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1719

INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCSO J2 QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

UNCLAS LA PAZ 5711

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, BL

SUBJ: OPPOSITION REACTION TO ANNULMENT OF BOLIVIAN ELECTIONS

1. SUMMARY. INITIAL REACTION FROM THE OPPOSITION TO THE DECISION TO ANNUL THE JULY 9 ELECTIONS HAS BEEN TO CHARACTERIZE THE DECISION AS AN ADMISSION OF OFFICIAL FRAUD. HERNAN SILES ZUAZO IMMEDIATELY ENDED HIS HUNGER STRIKE. THERE HAS BEEN NO REACTION YET FROM EITHER VICTOR PAZ OR GENERAL BERNAL. END SUMMARY.

2. THE STATEMENTS BELOW OF LEADING OPPOSITION FIGURES ARE ALL FROM PRESS ACCOUNTS. HERNAN SILES ZUAZO (UDP), WHOSE DECISION TO BEGIN A HUNGER STRIKE THE EVENING OF JULY 18 MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO PEREDA'S DECISION TO SEEK ANNULMENT OF THE ELECTIONS, ENDED HIS HUNGER STRIKE AT 2230 HOURS JULY 19, APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR AFTER THE DECISION OF THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COURT WAS ANNOUNCED.

2. THE UDP ISSUED A STATEMENT SAYING THAT, "THE ANNULMENT OF THE ELECTIONS IS AN OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE EXISTENCE OF FRAUD PERPETRATED BY THE GOVERNMENT (EL OFICIALISMO) UNDER THE UNCLASSIFIED

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DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY OF GENERAL BANZER. IT ALSO SIGNIFIES A SETTING ASIDE OF THE POPULAR VICTORY OF JULY 9 WHICH IS THE MOST SERIOUS CONSEQUENCE OF THIS ELECTION."

4. LABOR LEADER JUAN LECHIN OQUENDO PREDICTABLY TOOK THE HARDEST LINE AND SAID PEREDA'S DECISION WAS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE FRAUD AND TO CHOOSE ANOTHER OFFICIAL CANDIDATE. LECHIN

ADDED, "IN FACE OF THE SCANDALOUS FRAUD CARRIED OUT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES, NOW, TO CHEAT THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE, THEY OPT FOR THE NULLIFICATION OF THE ELECTIONS WITH THE OBJECT OF GIVING THEMSELVES MORE TIME TO PLAN A BETTER FRAUD AND IMPOSE, FROM THE GOVERNMENT, A CANDIDATE (MILITARY OR CIVILIAN) ON THE PART OF THE ARMED MILITARY PARTY."

5. THERE HAS BEEN NO REACTION YET FROM EITHER VICTOR PAZ OR GENERAL RENE BERNAL.

6. THE DECISION TO ANNUL THE ELECTIONS SHORT-CIRCUITED WHAT APPEARED TO BE A GROWING CONFRONTATION INCLUDING SEVERAL HUNGER STRIKES. ONE GROUP, BELONGING TO THE BOLIVIAN WOMEN'S PARTY, HAD ENCOMPED ON THE DOORSTEP OF THE RESIDENCE OF THE PAPEL NUNCIO, WHERE SILES ZUAZO WAS STAYING DURING HIS HUNGER STRIKE, AND ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WERE BEGINNING A HUNGER STRIKE IN PROTEST AGAINST SILES' ACTION. ANOTHER GROUP OF TEN WOMEN BELONGING TO THE PRO-PEREDA WING OF THE NNR ALSO BEGAN A HUNGER STRIKE OUTSIDE THE OFFICES OF THE NEWSPAPER PRESENCIA TO PROTEST SILES' ACTIONS. AND, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, APPROXIMATELY 50 CAMPESINOS WHO HAD JOINED SILES IN HIS HUNGER STRIKE WERE REMOVED THE EVENING OF JULY 19 BY THE POLICE FROM THE METHODIST CHURCH IN DOWNTOWN LA PAZ.
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